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ANNUAL REPORT

of the

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

FOR THE YEAR 1954



BOROUGH OF BRIDGNORTH

PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICERS OF THE AUTHORITY

1 9 5 4.

Medical Officer of Health : Margaret H. F. Turnbull,
M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H.

Senior Sanitary Inspector : E. J. Morgans, B.Sc., M.R.S.I.

Additional Sanitary Inspector: R. V. Webb, A.R.S.I.

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BOROUGH OF BRIDGNORTH
ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

1954

College House,
Bridgnorth.

September, 1955.

To the Mayor, Aldermen and Councillors:

Mr. Mayor, Ladies & Gentlemen,

I have the honour to present the Annual Report on matters relating to health and environmental hygiene in the Borough for the year 1954.

The Vital Statistics are on the whole satisfactory. The Birth-Rate is well above that for England and Wales for 1954, and shows an increase on the local figure for 1953. The Death-Rate is below the National Rate for 1954, and shows a decrease on the rate for the Borough for 1953. The Infant Mortality Rate is less than that recorded for the previous year, and less than the corresponding National Rate for 1954.

Six still-births, however, occurred during the year, there having been none during the preceding two years. The Still-Birth Rate was thus 44.8 per 1,000 total births, a figure well above the rate for England and Wales of 24.0.

There were no serious outbreaks of Infectious Disease, and the total of 20 infectious disease notifications was the lowest for many years. Eight new cases of Respiratory Tuberculosis were notified, but there were again no deaths from this disease.

Work commenced on the new sewerage and sewage disposal scheme for the town and good progress was made during the year. Towards the end of the year the approval of the Ministry of Housing and Local Government was given for the sewerage of Oldbury.

The refuse tip in Stanley Lane was again the subject of complaints by members of the public, and it is to be hoped that in the not too distant future it will be possible for the Council to provide an incinerator of suitable size to deal with all the town's refuse.

51 new Council houses were completed during 1954 on the Grove Estate, and 22 were under construction at the end of the year (including 4 bungalows for elderly couples). The Council now owns 22.21% of the total number of inhabited houses in the Borough.

6 Slaughterhouses in the town were licensed for twelve months when private slaughtering again became permissible in July, and meat inspection was then added to the duties of the Sanitary Inspectors. Only four of these slaughterhouses were used during the year.

I should like to express my thanks to Mr. E.J. Morgans and Mr. R.V. Webb for their assistance in the preparation of certain sections of this Report.

I have the honour to be
Your obedient Servant,

MARGARET H.F. TURNBULL.

Medical Officer of Health.

SECTION A.

STATISTICS AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS

GENERAL STATISTICS

Area of Borough, in acres	- 2,645
Estimated Population (mid-1954)	- 6,270
Number of Inhabited Houses	- 2,130
Rateable Value of Borough (at 31.12.54)	- £35,711
Estimated Product of 1d. Rate	- £139

VITAL STATISTICS

<u>Live Births</u>		<u>1954</u>	<u>1953</u>
Legitimate	(Male	67	51
	(Female	53	47
	(Total	120	98
	(Rate per 1,000 of population	19.1	16.0
Illegitimate	(Male	4	2
	(Female	4	5
	(Total	8	7
	(Rate per 1,000 of population	1.3	1.1
Total	(Male	71	53
	(Female	57	52
	(Total	128	105
	(Crude Rate per 1,000 of population	20.4	17.1
	("Corrected" Rate per 1,000 of population	20.4	17.1
<u>Still-Births</u>			
	(Male	6	0
	(Female	0	0
	(Total	6	0
	(Rate per 1,000 live & still-births	44.8	0
<u>Deaths</u>			
	(Male	30	37
	(Female	37	39
	(Total	67	76
	(Crude Rate per 1,000 of population	10.7	12.4
	("Corrected" Rate per 1,000 of population	8.9	10.4
<u>Deaths related to Pregnancy and Childbirth</u>		<u>Nil</u>	<u>Nil</u>
<u>Deaths of Infants under 1 Year of Age.</u>			
Legitimate	(Male	1	2
	(Female	2	1
	(Total	3	3
	(Rate per 1,000 legitimate live births	25.0	30.6
Illegitimate- Nil.			
Total	(Male	1	2
	(Female	2	1
	(Total	3	3
	(Rate per 1,000 total live births	23.4	28.6

Deaths from	<u>1954</u>	<u>1953</u>
Cancer (all sites)	11	11
Measles	0	0
Whooping-cough	0	0
Tuberculosis (respiratory & non-respiratory)	0	0
Diphtheria	0	0
Gastritis, enteritis & diarrhoea	1	0

Rates for England & Wales, 1954.

	<u>1954</u>
Birth-Rate per 1,000 of population	15.2
Still Birth-Rate per 1,000 live & still-births	24.0
Death-Rate per 1,000 of population.	11.3
Infant-Mortality Rate per 1,000 total live births	25.5

NOTES ON VITAL STATISTICS

Population.

The Registrar-General's estimated mid-year population for the Borough for 1954 was 6,270, an increase of 137 on the estimate for mid-1953. This figure is employed in the calculation of the Birth and Death-Rates.

Births.

There were 128 births during the year, of which 8 were illegitimate - a total increase of 23 on the figure for 1953.

The crude Birth-Rate, per 1,000 of the population, was 20.4, and the "corrected" Birth-Rate, with which comparisons with figures for other areas may be made, was likewise 20.4. This represents an increase of 3.3 births per 1,000 of the population as compared with 1953.

The Birth-Rate for England and Wales for 1954 was 15.2

Still-Births.

Six still-births were registered in the Borough during 1954, there having been none during the preceding two years. The Still-Birth Rate (per 1,000 live plus still-births) was 44.8, the corresponding rate for England and Wales being 24.0.

Deaths.

The total number of deaths during 1954 was 67 - a decrease of 9 as compared with the previous year.

The crude Death-Rate, per 1,000 of the population, was 10.7 (12.4 in 1953) corrected by the comparability factor for the Borough to 8.9. The Death-Rate for England and Wales was 11.3.

Causes of Death

	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>
Diseases of Heart & Circulation	11	13	24
Cancer (all sites)	3	8	11
Vascular lesions of Nervous System	4	5	9
Bronchitis	2	-	2
Influenza	-	2	2
Pneumonia	-	2	2
Accidents (Motor-Vehicle)	1	1	2
(excepting Motor-Vehicle)	1	1	2
All other causes	8	5	13
All causes :	<u>30</u>	<u>37</u>	<u>67</u>

Diseases of the Heart & Circulation, Cancer, and Vascular lesions of the Nervous System together accounted for 65.7% of the total number of deaths, as compared with 59.2% of the total for 1953.

Deaths from cancer numbered 11, the same figure as for the previous year. Only one death of the total 11 was due to cancer of the lung.

For the second year in succession there have been no deaths from Respiratory Tuberculosis.

Infant Mortality.

Three infants died during 1954 under the age of 1 year, (the same number as in 1953) all three having died before reaching the age of 4 weeks. The Infant Mortality Rate per 1,000 live births was 23.4, a decrease of 5.2 as compared with 1953. The Infant Mortality Rate for England and Wales for 1954 was 25.5.

Maternal Mortality.

Again this year there were no deaths related to pregnancy or childbirth.

Natural Increase of Population.

The number of births exceeded the number of deaths by 61.

SECTION B.

GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES.

Staff.

The names and qualifications of the Public Health Officers of the Authority are given at the beginning of the Report. There were no staff changes during the year.

Laboratory Facilities.

Bacteriological examination of samples of water, milk, ice-cream etc. and of pathological specimens submitted from Infectious Disease cases are carried out at the Public Health Laboratory, Royal Salop Infirmary, Shrewsbury. Full use of the facilities available was made during the year.

Ambulance Services.

The County Council, as Local Health Authority, is responsible for the provision of Ambulance Services in the area. The Central Ambulance Depot is in Shrewsbury. (Telephone No. Shrewsbury 6331) and two ambulances and a car for sitting-cases are stationed in Bridgnorth for use on local journeys.

Home Nursing, Health Visiting, Domiciliary Midwifery etc.

The above services are provided by the County Council and details relating to them may be obtained from the Annual Report of the County Medical Officer of Health.

During the year there was one Health Visitor working in the Borough and three home-nurse-midwives, one of whom is also a qualified Health Visitor.

Hospital Accommodation.

There were no changes during the year in the hospital facilities in the area. The Bridgnorth and South Shropshire Infirmary admits all general medical and surgical cases, including children. Infectious Disease cases are sent to Wolverhampton Isolation Hospital or to Monkmoor Hospital, Shrewsbury. Cases of Respiratory Tuberculosis usually receive treatment at Shirloft Sanatorium or at Prees Heath, but some have also been admitted to sanatoria at Knightwick and Malvern.

Innage House, under the direction of the County Welfare Department, is an Old Persons' Home, provided under Part III of the National Assistance Act; and the chronic sick receive treatment at Shifnal Hospital.

Accommodation for maternity cases is provided at the Infirmary, and in the one Nursing-Home in the Borough.

County Council Welfare Centre.

Child Welfare.

A Child Welfare Clinic is held every Monday at the Bridgnorth Welfare Centre, Northgate, from 10.0 a.m. - 12.30 p.m. and 1.30 - 4.30 p.m. when a Medical Officer is in attendance for consultation on all matters relating to Child Welfare.

Immunisation against Diphtheria and Whooping-cough, and Vaccination against Small-pox are provided at these sessions and a special session solely for Immunisation and Vaccination is held on the third Saturday in every month from 10 - 11 a.m. The latter is poorly attended however, most mothers finding it

more convenient to bring their babies and young children to the regular Monday sessions.

Attendances at the clinic during the year were on the whole satisfactory.

Welfare Foods.

The distribution of Welfare Foods became the responsibility of the County Council in July 1954, and since that date have been sold at the Welfare Centre by voluntary workers.

The times at which the Welfare Foods are available are as follows:-

Monday : 10.0 a.m. - 12 noon; 2.15 - 4.30 p.m.

Friday : 2.15 - 4.30 p.m.

Saturday : 10 a.m. - 12 noon.

[Since September 1955, Welfare Foods have been available at Messrs. Bloxam and Simms, West Castle Street, during business hours, and at the Welfare Centre during the hours stated above, except for the Monday morning session which has been cancelled]

Minor Ailments Clinic.

A minor ailments clinic for school-children was held daily, except Saturdays, from 9.0 - 10.0 a.m. at the Welfare Centre, a medical officer being in attendance on Mondays only.

[Since 1st June 1955 this clinic has been held on Mondays only]

Other County Council Services provided at the Welfare Centre.

Orthopaedic Clinic.

Held on the 1st and 3rd Mondays in each month from 11.0 a.m. - 1.0 p.m. (Discontinued as from 1st September 1955).

Chest Clinic.

Held throughout the year on the 4th Tuesday in each month, during the morning and afternoon. Owing to pressure of work, an extra session was found necessary, and since the beginning of 1955 the clinic has been held on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays in the month.

Speech Therapy.

Treatment of speech defects is given on Fridays (9.30 a.m. - 12.30 p.m. and 1.30 p.m. - 4.0 p.m.) when a Speech Therapist is in attendance.

Dental Service.

Since October 1954, facilities for the dental treatment of expectant and nursing-mothers, pre-school children and children of compulsory school age have been provided on Thursdays, both morning and afternoon, by a Local Authority Dental Officer.

Domestic Help Service.

The services of a domestic help are available for "any person who is ill, an expectant mother, mentally defective, aged, or a child not over compulsory school age".

Four part-time domestic helps were available for duty during the year, and good use was made of the service by the public.

Enquiries regarding the Domestic Help Service should be made at the Welfare Centre as follows:-

Monday, Wednesday, Friday - 2.15 - 4.30 p.m.

The Welfare Centre continued to be used during the year for hospital out-patient clinics, owing to lack of accommodation in the hospital premises.

SECTION C.

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA.

This Section deals with Water Supplies, Sewerage and Sewage Disposal, Refuse Collection and Disposal, Pest Control and other matters relating to environmental hygiene. I am indebted to the Senior Sanitary Inspector, Mr. E.J. Morgans, for many of the facts and figures contained in this and the following two Sections.

WATER SUPPLIES.

Mains Supply.

The mains water supply from Rindleford Borehole remained satisfactory during the year as regards quality and quantity.

The water is chlorinated at the pumping-station by means of a pressure-operated chlorinator, and samples of water were taken at intervals during the year and submitted to bacteriological examination to ensure the fitness of the water for drinking purposes.

On 9 samples the results were as follows:-

- 7 samples - Highly satisfactory.
- 1 " - Satisfactory.
- 1 " - Not entirely satisfactory for a chlorinated supply.

The hardness of the water from Rindleford and the domestic problems to which this gives rise was under discussion again during the year, and a sample was accordingly taken for chemical analysis. The report of the chemist was as follows:-

"A very hard water - 21.4 degrees (Clark's scale).
The chlorides are high but not harmful."

Enquiries were made as to the cost of installing a complete water-softening plant, and an estimate of £20,000 was submitted for the purchase and installation of such a plant. The Council felt, however, that this expenditure was not justifiable at present, and decided that no further action be taken in the matter meantime.

There is no evidence that the consumption of hard water has any deleterious effect on health, though its use for domestic purposes has many disadvantages.

The Rindleford supply also serves several areas outside the Borough, e.g. the R.A.F. Station at Stanmore, Tasley and Astley Abbots, and during the year a request was made for a supply to Rindleford Camping Site which adjoins the pumping-station.

Quantities of the order of 400,000 gallons daily were being consumed throughout the year and heavy demands were therefore being made on the pumps, which were working almost continuously. On the advice of the Borough Surveyor, therefore, it was decided that a new submersible pump should be purchased, to replace one of the existing spindle-type pumps. This is a much more efficient piece of machinery and it is estimated that it will increase the pumping-rate by about 35%.

Water-Storage.

During the year the attention of the Council was drawn to the fact that the existing reservoirs held less than the quantity of water being consumed daily, and that if for any reason the pumps should be put out of action temporarily, a serious scarcity might well result. The necessity for providing extra storage space was recognised, and preliminary details of a reservoir designed to hold one million gallons of water were submitted to the Council by the Surveyor.

Conduit Supply.

There are 24 conduit stand-pipes situated in various parts of the town but very few are now used for domestic purposes.

Three samples of the water in the conduit supply were taken during the year for bacteriological examination, and the results in each case showed the presence of coliform organisms, none of which appeared to be of excretal origin.

Because of this slight contamination, the conduit well was regularly treated with hypochlorite solution.

Private Water Supplies, Oldbury.

Samples were taken in the month of March from three wells at Oldbury - those serving "The Hollies", "Valrosa" and Merton Terrace. None were satisfactory on bacteriological examination. Consideration was therefore given to the question of providing these properties with piped water supplies and later in the year, when the supply to "The Hollies" failed, the Borough Surveyor was authorised to extend the 3" main approximately 120 yards to bring water within a reasonable distance of "The Hollies" and Merton Terrace.

Further work carried out during the year.

Grove site.

During the year the Borough Surveyor reported on the necessity of a new 6" watermain from the reservoir to connect with the Grove housing site to provide an alternative supply for Quatford and The Grove. Levels were taken, plans, estimates, and specifications were prepared and submitted to the Ministry of Housing and Local Government for approval.

The Yards.

It was necessary, owing to the very poor condition of the pipes, and the unsatisfactory water pressure in the area, to replace the $\frac{3}{4}$ " supply pipe over the Yards by a 2" asbestos cement pipe, for a distance of 125 yards.

Water Byelaws.

The Ministry of Housing and Local Government confirmed the draft Water Byelaws, which came into operation on 22nd November, 1954.

SEWERAGE AND SEWAGE DISPOSAL.

New Sewerage and Sewage Disposal Scheme.

Work commenced on the new sewerage and sewage disposal scheme for the Borough on 1st April, 1954, and satisfactory progress was made during the year. The inverted syphon consisting of 12" duplicate mains under the river and the pumping main were laid, and good progress was made with the disposal works in Stanley Lane and on the pumping-station. It was hoped that the new system would be in operation in the Summer of 1955.

After complaints had been received regarding the effluent from the existing sewage disposal works which discharges into the Centern Brook, it was decided to extend, at a cost of £900, the existing 9" diameter effluent drain to reach the river. The extension was to consist of 15" diameter piping, and it was agreed that the 9" section of the pipe should be replaced at a later date. Approval to this scheme was given by the Ministry of Housing and Local Government and the Severn River Board.

Oldbury.

Though the sewerage scheme for the Borough as originally planned and submitted to the Ministry of Housing and Local Government had included Oldbury, approval was not given for this section and it had perforce to be omitted. Concern was, however, felt about the existing sanitation in Oldbury where, though many properties had septic tank installations, the drainage of the effluent from these tanks was far from satisfactory and nuisances frequently arose, especially during the summer months. Further representations were therefore made to the Ministry during the year regarding the provision of a sewerage system for this part of the Borough. Authorisation was as a result given, and the tender of the contractors engaged on the main scheme, and amounting to £20,832, was accepted.

As an encouragement to property owners to connect their drains to the new sewer, the Council decided to provide free connections from the sewer to the boundaries of the properties, on condition that each owner agreed to lay the drain to the curtilage of his property within six months of the completion of the connecting branch by the Council.

Quatford.

A complete survey of the drainage and sewage disposal facilities at Quatford was carried out during the year, when it was ascertained that sewage from several properties was draining direct to the river without adequate treatment. Later in the year the Severn River Board suggested that the Corporation should provide a sewage disposal plant for Quatford. The matter received the Council's consideration and the Borough Surveyor was authorised to prepare a scheme.

River Pollution - A.T. & E. (Bridgnorth) Ltd.

Discussion took place with representatives of the A.T. & E. (Bridgnorth) Ltd. about trade waste disposal to the new works.

They were informed that a Trade Effluent Notice under Section 2 of the Public Health (Drainage of Trade Premises) Act, 1937 was required to be served on the Local Authority before discussion could take place. When this Notice was received with the information as to the effluent, the views of the Council's Consultant Chemist would be sought.

Further work carried out during the year.

The Grove.

The temporary sedimentation tank on the Grove Housing Estate (which was required to give preliminary treatment to sewage from this estate before its discharge into the public sewer) was completed early in the year.

Severn Street.

A new 12" storm overflow sewer was laid from Severn Street across the A.T. & E. Yard to an existing manhole connected to the River. No complaints of flooding in the works were received during the heavy storms which followed later in the year.

Public Conveniences.

Consideration was given by the Council during the year to the public conveniences in the town, the condition of some of which had been the subject of complaint by both visitors and townspeople.

It had been recognised for many years that the conveniences under the Town Hall were unsatisfactory by reason of their very conspicuous position and the inadequacy of the accommodation available. On market days especially these faults were very obvious as they are the only conveniences readily accessible for the stall-holders and shoppers in the High Street.

It was felt therefore that as the town attracted so many visitors during the summer months, and as it was in the interests of the town to encourage such visitors, a centrally-situated site should be sought for the provision of adequate sanitary accommodation.

Property was eventually found in Bank Street which appeared suitable though not ideal, but permission to convert the premises for this purpose was refused by the County Planning Authority. Another suitable site has not as yet been found but it is greatly to be hoped that it will eventually be possible for the Corporation to provide a centrally-situated block of sanitary conveniences, with much needed washing facilities, and to abandon the use of those under the Town Hall.

During the year the services of a Female Lavatory Attendant were secured, since when the cleanliness of the female conveniences has been much improved.

An improvement in the conveniences on the Recreation Ground was effected by the installation of water-closets connected to the public sewer, and the abandonment of the previously existing pail closets.

REFUSE AND SALVAGE COLLECTION.

The collection of refuse and salvage is carried out by the Corporation throughout the Borough.

A separate collection of household salvage is made, each area of the town being visited once in four weeks, and approximately one day per week is spent collecting salvage from commercial premises.

The tipping-space in Stanley Lane is rapidly becoming filled up, and the tip in its present uncovered state, despite regular treatment with insecticides, provides an ideal breeding-ground for flies. Complaints were received during the early summer months from the Matron of the Hospital and from householders in Love Lane of the extreme nuisance caused by these flies.

Another suitable tipping-site is not available in the Borough and the Council decided that enquiries should be made into the cost of providing an incinerator of sufficient size to deal with all the combustible refuse collected.

MORTUARY.

After negotiations with the Bridgnorth Rural District Council the Borough Council decided to consider improvements to the existing Mortuary at the Cemetery at an estimated cost of £750.

PEST CONTROL.

The Rodent Operative who works in the Borough for a total of four months in the year visited all premises reported, and those found to be infested with rats or mice, (including a number of industrial premises which have special contracts), received the necessary treatment.

The sewers in the Borough also received treatment, but only one partial "take" was observed in the Spring, in the Low Town area.

Periodic treatments of the refuse tip and the sewage disposal works kept them reasonably free from vermin.

FACTORIES AND WORKSHOPS.

Factories Acts 1937 and 1948.

(1)	Factories within the Borough during 1954 employing mechanical power ...	49
(2)	Factories within the Borough during 1954 not employing mechanical power...	8
(3)	Other premises, e.g. Electrical Stations, Sites of Building Operations, works of Engineering Construction	5
		<u>62</u>

The Corporation, under the Factories Acts, is responsible for ensuring the adequacy and suitability of sanitary conveniences in all factories, and in premises under Section (3) above, and is responsible for inspecting all factories in which mechanical power is not used, to ensure cleanliness, prevention of overcrowding, maintenance of an adequate temperature, adequate ventilation, and satisfactory drainage of floors.

19 factory inspections were made during the year, and in 6 cases defects were found. In 4 cases the defects were remedied satisfactorily.

H.M. Inspector of Factories reported 5 cases to the Sanitary Inspector, in one of which lack of cleanliness was the fault and in the remaining four, defects in relation to sanitary conveniences.

One person was notified by his employer as being an outworker.

SECTION D.

H O U S I N G.

Number of inhabited houses	...	...	2,130
Number of Council owned houses..	...	...	473

Houses completed in 1954

(i) Council	-	51
(ii) Private	-	10
		<u>61</u>

Total applications for Council houses	...	359
Applications for Improvement Grants	...	5
Applications for the above granted	...	4

(The fifth application was not granted as the Council were informed by the County Council that a highway improvement was likely to take place within the next five years and would include the demolition of the properties concerned).

Number of houses under construction
at 31st December, 1954.

(i) Council	-	22 (including 4 bungalows)
(ii) Private	-	13

Fewer houses were completed during 1954 than in the previous twelve months, 61 as compared with 91. Of the total 61, 51 were Council houses and the total of Council owned houses in the town is now 473 (22.21% of the number of inhabited houses).

The shortage of satisfactory housing accommodation in the Borough remains a very big problem, and the demand for new Council houses far exceeds the supply.

Quite a high percentage of the older houses now fall far below present-day standards of fitness and lack all modern amenities. It was with the object of saving such old property before, by neglect, it reached the stage of being fit only for demolition, that the Improvement Grants Scheme was introduced in the Housing Act of 1949. The response to this scheme on the part of house-property owners in the Borough has, however, been rather disappointing as yet, and only five applications for grants were made during 1954, only four of which could be approved. Disappointing as these figures appear however, they do represent an awakening of interest in the matter, for in 1953 there were only two applications, neither of which could be approved, and in the preceding two years no applications were received at all.

As the Improvement Grants Scheme stands at present, house-property owners may receive a grant from the Local Authority not exceeding 50% of the cost of approved improvements to their premises, the maximum grant allowable (except in special cases, subject to Ministerial sanction) being £400.

It is greatly to be hoped that more owners of the older, structurally sound, houses in the town, those without modern conveniences such as hot-water systems, bathrooms, indoor water-closets, food-stores, etc., will

take advantage of the opportunities offered to bring their property up to present-day standards. The cost of repairs, as distinct from improvements or conversions, cannot be included in the grant and must be borne by the landlord.

Encouragement to owners to carry out repairs to their houses was given in the Housing Rents and Repairs Act, 1954, which came into force on 30th August, 1954. By the provisions of this Act a landlord may claim an increase in rent in the case of a house controlled by the Rent Restrictions Acts, if he has spent a certain specified amount, calculated according to the rateable value of the house, during a certain period of time on repairs. A tenant dissatisfied about a claim for increased rent can apply to the Local Authority for a "Certificate of Disrepair". No application for such a certificate had been received by the end of 1954.

Houses neglected indefinitely become beyond repair and there are only too many of these throughout the country. The Housing Rents and Repairs Act, 1954, therefore requires all local housing authorities to submit to the Ministry of Housing and Local Government, as soon as possible and not later than 30th August, 1955, their proposals for dealing in one way or another with the houses in their area which appear to them to be unfit for human habitation and liable to demolition.

Housing Points System

It was becoming increasingly apparent that the existing Housing Points System for the allocation of Council houses was not entirely satisfactory, and did not give a true picture in many cases of real housing need. It was decided therefore, towards the latter end of the year, that a new system should be drawn up, and the Town Clerk was requested to prepare a scheme for the approval of the Council.

It was also decided that where a medical certificate was submitted by a person in support of his housing application, the Medical Officer of Health should investigate the circumstances and award points up to a specified maximum according to the need for rehousing on medical grounds. Under the old system every person submitting a medical certificate was awarded a set number of points in respect of this, and there was no means of assessing priority. This scheme came into operation in October and is found to work well in practice.

Housing of Elderly Persons.

The special housing needs of elderly couples on the Council's housing list received attention during the year, and the approval of the Ministry of Housing and Local Government was obtained for the erection of 4 bungalows on the Grove Estate. Approval for the erection of 8 more such bungalows on the Sydney Cottage Estate was also sought.

Housing Consolidated Regulations, 1925.

The Minister of Health has requested that the information required under Article 31 of the above Regulations should again be included in the Annual Reports of Medical Officers of Health. The Senior Sanitary Inspector has supplied the following figures:-

1.	The number of houses which on inspection were considered to be unfit for human habitation...	66
2.	The number of houses the defects in which were remedied in consequence of informal action by the local authority or their officers...	23
3.	The number of representations made to the local authority with a view to:-	
	(a) The serving of notices requiring the execution of works ...	0
	(b) The making of demolition or closing orders. ...	14
4.	The number of notices served requiring the execution of works...	2
5.	The number of houses which were rendered fit after the serving of formal notices ...	0
6.	The number of demolition or closing orders made...	14
7.	The number of houses in respect of which an undertaking was accepted under sub-section (2) of Section 19 of the Housing Act, 1930 ...	3
8.	The number of houses demolished. ...	2

SECTION E.

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

MEAT.

The Borough continued to obtain its meat supplies from the Central Abattoir at Wolverhampton until 29th June, 1954, when the Ministry of Food ceased to be responsible for the slaughter of animals.

Prior to this date, discussions took place between the Butchers' Association and the Council regarding the building of an abattoir to serve the Borough. The Ministry was approached but could give no indication as to whether or when an abattoir could be built in Bridgnorth.

The policy of the Government is to bring about a "moderate concentration" of slaughtering facilities throughout the country, but this long-term policy will of necessity take some years to apply. Meantime it became the responsibility of the local authorities under the provisions of the Slaughterhouses Act, 1954, to ensure that sufficient slaughtering accommodation was available for the requirements of their districts, and to licence private slaughterhouses.

All existing slaughterhouses in the Borough were inspected and found to be far from satisfactory. Schedules of work required to bring these premises up to a reasonable standard were issued to occupiers, and the Council agreed to licence six premises, for which applications had been received, for a period of twelve months.

Two of the six slaughterhouses were not used during the year, and approximately half of the butchers in the town bought their meat from the Shrewsbury abattoir. The remainder slaughtered in the town, and some shared slaughterhouses. After the decontrol of meat, local authorities also became responsible for the inspection of the meat intended for human consumption at slaughterhouses in their areas.

The number of animals slaughtered and inspected in the Borough between 2nd July and the end of the year was as follows:-

Sheep	-	626
Pigs	-	457
Cattle	-	98
Calves	-	7

Meat condemned during the year as being unfit for human consumption.

Fresh meat

(i) Beef

One imported hind quarter	-	253 lbs.
One head (complete)	-	30 lbs.
One Tongue	-	8 lb.
Two livers	-	25 lbs.

(ii) Mutton

One lamb carcase complete with organs	-	19 lbs.
One set lungs	-	2 lbs.
Several part livers	-	No weight

(iii) <u>Pork</u>	One pig carcase (complete with head and organs)	- 160 lbs. (Generalised T.B.)
	Twenty heads	- 276 lb.
	Four sets lungs	- 9½ lbs.
	Two livers	- 8½ lbs.
	Two hearts	- 2½ lbs.
	One spleen	- ¼ lb.

MILK.

Registered Dairies (Under Milk and Dairies Regulations) ...	...	...	5
Licensed Dealers (operating from Registered Dairies) ...	...	...	5
Other licensed dealers (trading from other shops etc.)..	...	...	7
Supplementary Dealers (trading in the town from other districts)	...	...	1
Mil producers in the district (under supervision of Ministry of Agriculture) ...	...	...	13

During the year nine samples of milk were taken and submitted to examination for cleanliness, keeping quality, and evidence of satisfactory heat treatment. Six samples were reported as satisfactory, two failed to conform to the standard and one test was void.

Appropriate action was taken in respect of the milk from which the two unsatisfactory samples were taken.

The County Sampling Officer took samples of raw designated milk from licensed dealers in the Borough after complaints had been received regarding the quality of the milk. Two samples were taken, and in each case the analysis proved satisfactory.

ICE-CREAM.

There are 47 premises in the Borough registered for the sale of ice-cream all but one selling pre-packed products. The "cold-mix" method is employed by the trader who manufactures his own ice-cream. By this method, water is added to a prepared powder, supplied in air-tight containers, and the mixture immediately frozen.

FOOD PREMISES.

Number of food premises in the area by type.

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Number of Inspections.</u>
Grocers and General Stores	26	56
Greengrocers	14	6
Butchers	11	28
Cafes	10	14
Bakers	8	9
Fishmongers	5	4

Number of food premises registered under Section 14
of the Food & Drugs Act, 1938.

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Number of Inspections</u>
Cooked meats, etc.	7	22
Fish friers	7	16
Ice-cream	47	49

Regular inspections of food premises, including cafes in the area, continued to be made during the year, and a number of informal notices were served on the owners or occupiers, where conditions were found to fall short of the requirements of Section 13 of the Food and Drugs Act, 1938 (Provisions relating to rooms in which food, other than milk, intended for human consumption, is stored, prepared, sold, etc.).

The Food and Drugs Amendment Act, 1954, received the Royal Assent on 29th November, 1954, but apart from one section (dealing with the restriction of private slaughter-houses) which operated from that date, has not yet come into force. Consolidation will first be effected between the new Act and previous Acts dealing with Food and Drugs, and Food Hygiene Regulations will be introduced to replace Section 13 of the Food and Drugs Act, 1938.

The standard of hygiene in many of the food premises in the town has been improved during the year, but in some cases conditions still leave a lot to be desired, and fall below Bye-law standards.

The public can help greatly by insisting on higher standards of hygiene in food shops.

FOOD CONDEMNED.

The following foods, in addition to the fresh meat already listed, were condemned as unfit for human consumption:-

Prepared and cooked meats.

Meat	- 26 lb. 12 ozs.
Sausage	- 126 lbs.

Canned and Potted food.

Meat	- 28 tins (91 lb. 14½ ozs.)
Vegetables	- 65 tins (39 lb. 15½ ozs.)
Fish	- 12 tins (8 lb. 7¾ ozs.)
Fruit	- 222 tins (252 lb. 3 ozs.)
Soup	- 3 tins (1 lb. 14½ ozs.)
Milk	- 10 tins (equivalent of 16 pints)

Other foods.

Cheese	- 35 lb. and one small box.
Frozen eggs	- 5 tins (70 lb.).
Lentils	- 27 lb.
Marsh mallows	- 18.
Pickled food	- 2 botts. (4 ozs.)
Dried fruit	- 43 lb.

Condemned food is collected by the Corporation, or delivered by the owners, and destroyed on the small incinerator at the refuse tip.

SECTION F.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

The numbers of cases of Infectious Disease notified by general practitioners during 1954 were as follows:-

Respiratory Tuberculosis	-	8
Whooping-cough	-	7
Acute primary pneumonia	-	1
Erysipelas	-	1
Scarlet Fever	-	1
Malaria	-	1
Food-poisoning	-	1

The Borough has been remarkably free from cases of notifiable infectious disease during 1954, the total of 20 cases being the lowest for many years.

The case of malaria occurred in an ex-serviceman back from service in the Far East where the infection had been contracted. The case notified as food-poisoning occurred after the consumption of mussels, and from the symptoms appeared to be a condition of allergy to the shell-fish rather than true food-poisoning.

Tuberculosis.

8 cases of Respiratory Tuberculosis were notified during 1954, an increase of 5 on the figures for 1953. Of these 8, 3 were males and 5 were females.

No new cases of the non-respiratory forms of the disease were notified.

The numbers on the Tuberculosis Register at the end of 1954 were as follows:-

<u>Respiratory.</u>			<u>Non-Respiratory.</u>		
<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>
19	19	38	3	4	7

There were again no deaths from this disease during the year.

Diphtheria.

No cases of diphtheria have occurred in the Borough for many years now, but it remains as necessary as ever for babies to be immunized against the disease if its continued absence from the community is to be ensured.

During the past 10 years, as a result of the national campaign against diphtheria, a vast reduction in the annual number of notifications and deaths has been effected. In 1945, there were 18,596 cases and 722 deaths; in 1954 there were 132 cases and only 9 deaths.

It is considered that to control the disease effectively not less than 75% of all babies should be immunized before reaching the age of twelve months. This figure is not being reached over the country as a whole, and the Ministry of Health has reported that for the first half of 1954 the percentage for England and Wales was only 35.75.

From figures obtained from the County Health Department, it appears that only 36 babies under the age of one year were immunized in the Borough during 1954 - approximately 32.8% of those who might have been given the benefit of this protection. This is a lamentably low percentage and the efforts of all concerned should be directed towards improving it in subsequent years.

Small-pox Vaccination.

Vaccination against small-pox is no longer compulsory in this country, the Vaccination Acts having been repealed by the National Health Service Act of 1946. Some people therefore tend to believe that it is no longer necessary, which is far from being the case, particularly in these days of increased and speedier international travel.

Ideally all babies should be vaccinated for the first time about the age of 3 - 4 months, when the procedure should cause little or no general upset. If it has to be done in later childhood or in adult life, as may be necessary, for example during a local outbreak of small-pox, for emigration purposes or on entry into the Armed Forces, unpleasant local and general reactions may sometimes occur.

During 1954, 54 babies under the age of twelve months in the Borough were vaccinated, approximately 53% of those who were eligible for this protection. This percentage is better than that for diphtheria immunization, but like the latter could be greatly improved.

Under the County Council's Scheme both vaccination and immunization can be provided by arrangement with a general medical practitioner, or at a Child Welfare Centre.

